

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 NEW DE 09244 100510Z

13

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15

OMB-01 AID-20 RSR-01 /103 W

----- 051397

R 090830Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6079

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 9244

THE FOLLOWING TEL FROM CALCUTTA SENT ACTION NEW DELHI INFO
BOMBAY MADRAS DTD 8 AUG IS RPTD:

QUOTE

CALCUTTA 1473

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJ: WEST BENGAL: RAY MINISTRY UNRAVELLING?

REF: CALCUTTA 1450

1. MOST INTERESTING POLITICAL SITUATION IS EVOLVING IN
WEST BENGAL. WHAT STARTED WITH THE RESIGNATION OF THE FOOD
MINISTER AND A MINOR REORGANIZATION OF OTHER PORTFOLIOS
(REFTEL) HAS BEGUN TO SNOWBALL INTO WHAT COULD BE A MAJOR
REALIGNMENT OF FORCES WITHIN THE STATE CONGRESS PARTY.

2. IN BRIEF, CHIEF MINISTER ANNOUNCED MONDAY EVENING THAT
HE WAS RELIEVING SUBRATA MUKHERJEE OF THE HOME PORTFOLIO.
BY TUESDAY AFTERNOON MUKHERJEE (AFTER CONSULTATION WITH
UNION COMMERCE MINISTER AND CHIEF GURU OF WEST BENGAL YOUTHS
D.P. CHATTOPADHYAYA AND P. R. DAS MUNSHI, M.P.) APPARENTLY
DECIDED TO TAKE THE DEMOTION (WHICH ENTAILED LOSING HOME BUT
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 NEW DE 09244 100510Z

GAINING 'INDEPENDENT CHARGE', I.E. HAVING NO CABINET MINISTER

OVER HIM, FOR MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS, PANCHAYAT, ARCHAEOLOGY, INFORMATION, PUBLIC RELATIONS AND YOUTH SERVICES). SOME YOUTH CONGRESS/CHHATRA PARISHAD ELEMENTS OBJECTED TO HIS ACCEPTING THE POLITICAL DEMOTION AND ARE URGING MUKHERJEE TO RESIGN AND COMMENCE THE 'BATTLE ROYAL' (AS PREDICTED IN BHATTACHARJEE/BURLEIGH MEMCON DATED JUNE 29) BETWEEN THE YOUTH WING AND OLD GUARD OF THE PARTY.

3. MEANWHILE ANOTHER BOMBSHELL WAS DROPPED WHEN THREE OTHER MINISTERS OF STATE ANNOUNCED THEIR RESIGNATION FROM THE GOVT TUESDAY NIGHT AS THEY HAD BEEN DENIED 'INDEPENDENT CHARGE' OF THEIR MINISTRIES. AT SAME TIME, LABOR/YOUTH/PARTY LEADER L. K. BOSDURE SIGNED AS CONGRESS LEGISLATIVE PARTY SECRETARY (SEE POL/LABOR NOTE DATED MAY 31 FOR DESCRIPTION OF BOSE'S IMPORTANT ROLE IN STATE PARTY) DIRECTLY CRITICIZING CHIEF MINISTER FOR OFFENDING THREE IMPORTANT CONGRESS MLAS.

4. WHERE ALL THIS WILL LEAD IS ANYBODY'S GUESS AT THIS POINT. THE WEST BENGAL CONGRESS IS HIGHLY FACTIONALIZED (SEE POLNOTE OF FEB .6). THE YOUTH WINGS HAVE STEADILY LOST POWER OVER THE YEAR AND IT MAY BE THAT WHAT IS GOING ON IS THE PAINFUL ADJUSTMENT IN THE RAY MINISTRY TO PARTY POWER REALITIES (WHICH WERE TO A LARGE EXTENT CONFIRMED WITH THE OUSTER OF DAS MUNSHI AS PARTY GENERAL SECRETARY IN JANUARY). IF THIS IS THE CASE, RAY MAY CONTINUE TO HEAD THE GOVERNMENT. IT MIGHT ALSO BE THAT CHATTOPADHYAYA WILL DECIDE (OR HAS DECIDED) TO MAKE HIS MOVE TO ESTABLISH A NEW CONGRESS MINISTRY.

5. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS KIND OF JOSTLING LIES PRIMARILY IN ITS REFLECTION OF AND POTENTIAL IMPACT ON THE ROLE OF YOUTH IN POLITICS HERE. IN THAT REGARD WHAT HAPPENS TO SUBRATA MUKHERJEE, P. R. DAS MUNSHI AND OTHER CONGRESS-ALIGNED YOUTH ACTIVISTS IS IMPORTANT. IT IS WE THINK NO MERE COINCIDENCE THAT ONLY IN KERALA AND WEST BENGAL HAVE YOUTH COME TO POWER IN ANY SIGNIFICANT WAY. IN BOTH THESE STATES, BUT ESPECIALLY HERE, CONGRESS YOUTH WORKERS WERE THE VANGUARD OF THE ANTI-CPI(M) FORCES. IN WEST BENGAL, THEY ALSO SLUGGED IT OUT WITH THE NAXALITES IN THE STREETS AND IN THE COLLEGE UNIONS. IT WAS THE YOUTH CONGRESS WHICH PATROLLED THE STREETS, KEPT SHOPS OPEN, ETC. DURING THE BANGLA BANDH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 NEW DE 09244 100510Z

AND THEY ARE NOW ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN A DE-HOARDING CAMPAIGN IN AN ATTEMPT TO BRING DOWN THE COST OF LIVING. WHILE THEY HAVE SOMETHING OF THE URBAN GANG-LEADER ABOUT THEM, AND ARE DISTINCTLY UNCOUTH IN THE EYES OF THEIR ELDER AND MORE CONSERVATIVE PARTY COLLEAGUES, THEY ARE DYNAMIC YOUNG MEN WHO OPENLY AND VIGOROUSLY VOICE THEIR CONCERN OVER THE DECISIVE ROLE IN STATE GOVT AND POLITICS OF THE OLD GUARD CONGRESS, THE POLICE, THE BUREAUCRATS, THE MERCHANTS WHO HOARD AND

MANIPULATE. THEY IN A SENSE REPRESENT THE SOCIAL GROUPS
(THE EDUCATED UNEMPLOYED, THE URBAN LOWER MIDDLE CLASS, THE
SMALL LANDOWNER) WITH WHICH THE OLDER GUARD OF THE CONGRESS
FAILED TO ESTABLISH MEANINGFUL TIES OR EVEN COMMUNICATION.
THE CPI(M) ALSO ACTIVELY CULTIVATES THESE TARGET GROUPS.
THEY ARE POLITICALLY ENGAGED, HAVE HAD A STRONG TASTE OF POWER,
AND, IF NOT ACCOMMODATED IN THE CONGRESS, WILL SURELY GO
ELSEWHERE.
PICKERING
UNQUOTE
MOYNIHAN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 AUG 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: elyme
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973NEWDE09244
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730848/aaaabjbg.tel
Line Count: 126
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: CALCUTTA 1450
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: elyme
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 DEC 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19-Dec-2001 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <09-Jan-2002 by elyme>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: WEST BENGAL: RAY MINISTRY UNRAVELLING?
TAGS: PINT, IN
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005